

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously presented) A spinal stabilization system, comprising:

a stabilization device positionable along a spinal column, said stabilization device including at least one auxiliary element mounted thereto, said at least one auxiliary element including a cannulation extending at least partially therethrough between a proximal opening of said auxiliary element oriented away from the spinal column and a distal opening of said auxiliary element oriented toward the spinal column when said stabilization device is positioned along the spinal column; and

a holding element including a distal portion and a proximal portion, said distal portion including an elongated shaft extending from said proximal portion to a distal end, wherein with said at least one auxiliary element mounted to said stabilization device said distal end of said distal portion is configured for placement into said proximal opening and through said distal opening of said cannulation to advance said shaft through said proximal opening to releasably engage a distal end of said proximal portion with said auxiliary element in an interfitting relationship and position said distal end of said shaft distally of said distal opening of said auxiliary element to enter into bone and engage the spinal column to maintain a positioning of said stabilization device along the spinal column and said distal end of said proximal portion preventing said auxiliary element from moving relative to said stabilization member, wherein when said holding element is engaged to said auxiliary element with said distal portion of said holding element extending distally from said auxiliary element and into bone of the spinal column, rotation of said proximal and distal portions of said holding element rotates said auxiliary element relative to said stabilization device.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said stabilization device comprises an elongated plate including a number of bone anchor openings extending therethrough.

3. (Previously presented) The system of claim 2, wherein said auxiliary element includes a retaining device engaged to said plate at a location offset from said number of bone anchor openings and is positionable relative to said elongated plate to at least partially overlap at least one of said bone anchor openings.

4. (Previously presented) The system of claim 3, wherein said retaining device includes a fastener with a proximal head and a threaded stem extending distally from said proximal head, said threaded stem threadingly engages plate and said cannulation extends along a central axis of said fastener and with said distal opening at a distal end of said stem and said proximal opening at a proximal end of said head.

5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein said retaining device includes a retaining member including a central aperture for receiving said fastener.

6. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein said elongated plate includes an aperture extending therethrough and said fastener is engageable with said aperture.

Claim 7 (Cancelled)

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said auxiliary element is movable relative to said stabilization device.

9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein said holding element engages said auxiliary element and is movable to manipulate said auxiliary device to a desired position relative to said stabilization device.

10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said distal end of said proximal portion of said holding element includes a distally oriented engagement surface for engaging said auxiliary element, said distally oriented engagement surface projecting outwardly around said distal portion of said holding element and including at least one projection for receipt in a recess in said auxiliary element in said interfitting relationship.

11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 10, wherein said holding element includes an intermediate portion between said distal portion and said proximal portion, said proximal portion including a shaft and a first driving tool engaging portion adjacent said intermediate portion that projects outwardly from said shaft, said intermediate portion further including a tapered body portion sloping from said distally oriented engagement surface to said first driving tool engaging portion.

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 11, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a second driving tool engaging portion adjacent a proximal end of said shaft of said proximal portion that includes a recess in an outer surface of said shaft.

Claim 13 (Cancelled)

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said shaft includes a smooth surface profile extending proximally from said distal end of said shaft.

15. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a device positionable between vertebrae of a spinal column and wherein said stabilization device is positionable along the vertebrae.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein:
said cannulation extends completely through said auxiliary element; and
said distal portion of said holding element extends through said auxiliary element and is engageable with said device when said stabilization device is positioned along the spinal column.

17. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein said device is a corpectomy implant and said stabilization device is an elongated plate.

18. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising an instrument engageable to said proximal portion of said holding element.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a first instrument engaging portion adapted to deliver a rotational force from said instrument to said holding element and a second instrument engaging portion to simultaneously axially secure said instrument to said holding element.

20. (Previously presented) A spinal stabilization system, comprising:

a stabilization device positionable along a spinal column and including an auxiliary element associated therewith and movable relative thereto, said auxiliary element including a cannulation extending between a proximal opening and a distal opening of said auxiliary element, said auxiliary element further including a proximal engagement surface; and

a holding element including a distal portion positionable in said cannulation of said auxiliary element and configured to enter into bone of the spinal column, a proximal portion extending proximally from said distal portion, and an intermediate portion therebetween, wherein said distal portion includes an elongated shaft extending from said intermediate portion to a distal end, wherein with said at least one auxiliary element mounted to said stabilization device said distal end of said distal portion is configured for placement into said proximal opening and through said distal opening of said cannulation to advance said shaft through said proximal opening to releasably engage a distally oriented engagement surface of said intermediate portion with said proximal engagement surface of said auxiliary element in an interfitting relationship and position said distal end of said shaft distally of said distal opening of said auxiliary element to enter into bone and engage the spinal column to maintain a positioning of said stabilization device along the spinal column, wherein said distal and intermediate portions of said holding element being movable when said distally oriented engagement surface is interfitted with said proximal engagement surface and said distal portion is entered into bone of the spinal column to move said auxiliary element in a desired position relative to said stabilization device.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said stabilization device comprises an elongated plate including a number of bone anchor openings extending therethrough.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein said auxiliary element includes a retaining device positionable relative to said elongated plate to at least partially overlap at least one of said bone anchor openings.

23. (Previously presented) The system of claim 20, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a first driving tool engaging portion proximally of and adjacent to said intermediate portion and a shaft extending proximally from said first driving tool engaging portion, said first driving tool engaging portion extending outwardly from said shaft, said intermediate portion further including a tapered body sloping from said distally oriented engagement surface to said first driving tool engaging portion, said proximal portion further including a second driving tool engaging portion on said shaft spaced from said first driving tool engaging portion and adjacent to a proximal end of said proximal portion.

24. (Previously presented) The system of claim 23, wherein said second driving tool engaging portion includes a recess in an outer surface of said shaft.

Claim 25 (Cancelled)

26. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a first instrument engaging portion adapted to deliver a rotational force from an instrument to said holding element and a second instrument engaging portion adapted to axially secure the instrument to said holding element.

27. (Currently amended) A ~~device for temporarily securing a spinal stabilization system to a spinal column~~, comprising:

a stabilization device including a cannulation and an auxiliary element; and

a holding element including a distal portion with an elongated first shaft extending to a sharp distal tip positionable in said cannulation of said stabilization device, a cannulation of the stabilization system, a proximal portion extending proximally from said distal portion, and an intermediate portion therebetween that projects outwardly from said proximal portion and said distal portion, said intermediate portion including at least one projection extending distally therefrom and outwardly from said distal portion adapted to engage said auxiliary element of said stabilization device an auxiliary element of the stabilization system and deliver a rotational force thereto, wherein said proximal portion of said holding element includes a second shaft and a first instrument engaging portion projecting outwardly from said second shaft that is adapted to receive a rotational force delivered to said holding element that rotates said proximal portion and said distal portion in said cannulation and a second instrument engaging portion spaced from said first instrument engaging portion adapted to receive an axial force delivered to said holding element, wherein with said the auxiliary element mounted to said the stabilization device said distal tip of said first shaft is configured for placement into a proximal opening of said the cannulation and through a distal opening of said the cannulation to advance said first shaft through said the proximal opening to releasably engage said at least one projection of said intermediate portion with said the auxiliary element in an interfitting relationship and position said distal tip of said first shaft distally of said the distal opening of said the cannulation to enter into bone and engage the spinal column to maintain a positioning of said the stabilization device along the spinal column with said at least one projection of said intermediate portion preventing said the auxiliary element from moving relative to said the stabilization device member.

28. (Previously presented) The device of claim 27, wherein said intermediate portion includes a distally oriented engagement surface projecting outwardly from said distal portion, said distally oriented engagement surface including said at least one projection extending distally therefrom.

29. (Previously presented) The device of claim 28, wherein said sharp distal tip is located at a distal end of said first shaft and said first shaft includes a smooth surface profile extending proximally from said distal tip.

30. (Previously presented) The device of claim 29, wherein said intermediate portion includes a frusto-conical body that tapers from said distally oriented engagement surface to said first instrument engaging portion.

31. (Previously presented) The device of claim 30, wherein said first instrument engaging portion includes a head proximally of and adjacent to said intermediate portion that is shaped to receive a tool thereover and said second instrument engaging portion is a recess adjacent to a proximal end of said shaft of said proximal portion.

Claims 32-69 (Cancelled)